

**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**FY11 Operating Budget Forum –before the Montgomery County Council**  
**April 8, 2010**  
**Mark Maxin, Chair | Aaron Kaufman, Vice- Chair**

Good Evening, my name is Mark Maxin and I am speaking on behalf of the Commission on People with Disabilities. We recognize that these are severe economic times and request and trust that you will sustain or increase programs as possible. We ask for consideration of the following:

- Currently, it appears that the services provided by HHS are mostly serving people in crisis or adult protective services or what is known as the “safety net”. We ask that you consider persons who have developmental disability and who are on the Developmental Disabilities Administration Waiting list as being in crisis. The County’s “crisis” in serving this population is due to the State’s poor record of funding programs and services for this population. According to End the Wait Now, Maryland is the wealthiest state in the nation yet ranks 43rd in terms of state spending on developmental disability services. Only eight states rank lower: Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Nevada, Texas and Virginia. Maryland devotes 21% less resources for community services than the average state. Children and adults with significant developmental disabilities throughout Maryland need essential services to remain with their families and in their communities. These services have not been adequately funded, so individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have been placed on a Waiting List for community services kept by the Developmental Disabilities Administration. The list has grown to crisis proportions with over 19,000 people statewide with over 3,300 being from Montgomery County.
- We encourage/need you to consider an intake and service coordination system to provide more preventative and maintenance versus crisis only services. There is a need for more service coordinators for people with developmental disabilities to serve as a Safety Net for those that do not and will not get services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration. As the County reduces In Home Aide Services, and Respite the DD waiting list number of people that need assistance getting through the system will increase, and there will be no one able to assist them while they wait for services.
- The Commission joins with Inter ACC/DD in requesting that you include the \$600,000 for the annualization of last year’s new services and for coverage of services to new clients who have a developmental disability in FY11. Agencies providing residential, day and support services for adults who have developmental disabilities in Montgomery County took a 7% cut in the County Executive’s proposed FY11 budget. The DD Supplement/Match which is designed to pay a living wage for direct service employees was cut by about \$580,000. This is on top of a Maryland State Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) cut of 2% in FY10 which cost our Montgomery County Agencies an estimated \$1,847,041. Since there is not additional funding in the proposed budget to pay for an expansion of services, the result means that the cuts per person served are more than 7%. InterACC/DD is willing to accept the 7% cut, because they realize the difficult situation that the County is in and feels that they need to bear the pain along with everyone else. DD providers are not willing to accept a 14% cut for services, which is what this budget would result in.
- Restore \$100,000 in the In-Home Aide Care Program which would allow for the provision of more than 14 hours per week, on a case-by-case basis after an updated evaluation, for those 120 identified persons who would be adversely affected by the proposed reduction in hours per week from 20 to a maximum of 14.
- Restore eliminated bus routes and cuts to Call N’Ride to Transit Services. Metro Access is currently considering cutting back and only providing service where there is a fixed route. If the bus routes are eliminated, it is very likely that Metro Access will be eliminated too along those routes.

- Continue funding for the Customized Employment Internship Program.
- Provide additional resources the Senior Nutrition program to provide additional home delivered meals for **people who have disabilities under age 60 years old** who have a difficult time leaving their home and need assistance with food preparation.
- Restore funding for the Library's Disability Resource Center and at minimum not cut anymore from the library. The library serves an important function for disabilities: On a basic level, the library provides computer/internet access to those who cannot afford it in their homes. Further, libraries have specialized assistive technology for people with disabilities. Much of this technology is necessary for people to access the computer but is too expensive for them to purchase on their own. The library also provides training on technology. The library also provides additional services, including a homebound service, for patrons who cannot physically get to the library. Moreover, books, whether hard copy, digital, audio, etc., are for everyone to enjoy. The library should be a place that everyone can access, regardless of ability or disability. Already due to the budget cuts, the talking books collection is being moved from the Rockville library to the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, in Baltimore. People who use these books, such as people who are blind or have low vision, cannot no longer go to the Rockville library, browse and check out a book like everyone else can. Talking books are now ordered from Baltimore and mailed to the person's house. Further cuts would limit, and possibly even eliminate even more services for people with disabilities. We ask that the Council not overlook the fact that people with disabilities have the right to use the libraries and **DO** use the libraries. Services that allow people with disabilities equal access are important and need to be maintained.
- The Commission on Aging is requesting funding a Geriatric Mental Health Treatment Team for low-income seniors with mental health and substance abuse problems. We support their request for this much needed program, and request that you **extend** this program to also serve **people with disabilities who are under age 60** who have a difficult time or are unable to leave their home to receive needed mental health and substance abuse services.

The Commission worked with the Commission on Veterans Affairs, Office of Human Resources, Health and Human Services and the County Council to work to have Bill 46-09 Hiring Preference for People with Disabilities signed into law. We thank you for your outstanding leadership in unanimously supporting this milestone local legislation.

In closing, we recommend that you sustain or increase services as you can in County programs for people with disabilities, including the County's support for community based service providers who do so much to enrich the lives of so many. The County has had a long-standing, laudable policy that enables people with disabilities to live as independently, productively and safely as possible. In order to maintain this policy, the County needs to adequately fund disability programs. We thank HHS and the County for all you have done to make our community a better place to live for people with disabilities.

***“A Community's Budgetary Choices and Policies Reflect its Values”***